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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WESTMORELAND).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 14, 2005.

I hereby appoint the Honorable LYNN A. WESTMORELAND to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 25 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate extend beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

RICE AS AN ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCE

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to highlight the prospect of using rice as an alternative energy source in the production of ethanol.

We all understand the importance of securing affordable and reliable means of energy for future generations. On the heels of the comprehensive energy bill that this body passed in April, which encourages ethanol production, I submit that rice and rice farmers spe-

cifically could contribute to this endeavor.

Rice producers like those in my southeast Texas district face great difficulties in finding markets for their goods. Just a few years ago, there were over 600,000 acres in Texas that was farmed for rice, about the size of Rhode Island. Now, less than 200,000 acres are rice farmlands.

One untapped potential market is ethanol. While many folks think about ethanol developed from corn, not much attention has been directed to ethanol developed from rice. The process of cellulosic conversion can derive ethanol from various sources including rice. It is essential that the Department of Agriculture continue their work with the universities in Texas to fund research into this type of conversion to ethanol.

I understand the problems facing rice farmers in Texas. It is critical to support scientific research that develops new markets for our farmers. Cellulosic conversion holds the promise of deriving ethanol from rice along with other biomass materials.

Mr. Speaker, the President's budget was tough on farm programs and it is important that we support agricultural research that benefits American farmers and helps supply Americans with more energy.

AMERICA'S MILITARY PROBLEMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak again about the dire situation in Iraq. A series of articles over the last week has drawn attention to two related issues, the slow training and improvement in quality of the Iraqi security forces, and the problems in recruitment in the American mili-

tary, particularly in our Army that risk breaking our force.

I fear, though, that without greater attention to these two problems, we are endangering not only our efforts in Iraq, but also our future military force.

Mr. Speaker, Lieutenant General Dave Petraeus has had the mission of training the Iraqi security forces and turning them into the professional fighting force since last spring. He is a fine officer and a great leader.

But, this is a mammoth task. And over a year, they have only produced three battalions, around 5,000 soldiers capable of conducting fully independent operations. This is disheartening. And then when we read stories like the ones in last week's Washington Post, of embedded American trainers describing the Iraqi trainers as preschoolers with guns, it is easy to think that American forces would have to stay in Iraq a long time to get those forces to the point where they can handle their security on their own.

We have to speed up the process. Our NATO partners have promised to lend their efforts to training Iraqi security forces. They must get more engaged and soon. We have embedded trainers and transition teams with the Iraqis. We must commit even more trainees to the effort.

If that means moving more Air Force and Navy personnel to Army billets to free them up for this mission, we need to do this. We need to accomplish this mission as quickly as possible because time is not on our side.

Mr. Speaker, we are in a race against time. We are either going to lose the American people's support for this effort or break the Army. This month the Army's recruiting numbers are far below its goal, and it is an unmistakable trend. Although retention is holding, the toll is shaking the very foundation of American structure. Army marriages, broken under the strain of an unsustainable operations tempo are

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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